# The intriguing past of South Kentish Town station resurfaces



A unique incident involving London's railway history has resurfaced, capturing the interest of both commuters and history enthusiasts. An unsuspecting commuter recently disembarked at the now-abandoned platform of South Kentish Town station while his train was halted at a signal. This unexpected detour has reopened discussions about the station's intriguing past.

South Kentish Town station, which opened its doors in 1907 as part of the Charing Cross, Euston and Hampstead Railway, occupies a location on the western side of Kentish Town Road, near the junction with Castle Road. Initially earmarked to be named Castle Road, the name was altered before any signage was placed. Despite its long-standing presence, the station was never heavily trafficked and was closed during a power station strike in 1924, never to reopen for regular service.

Although the station ceased operations, the line between Charing Cross and Hampstead remained in use. A well-documented scenario unfolded after the station’s closure; a train halted near the abandoned platform, and a passenger inadvertently stepped off into what he presumed to be darkness. During this period, trains were equipped with manually operated doors, a significant detail that aided in the bewilderment of the unaware commuter.

This eerily captivating experience was later chronicled in the London Underground staff magazine, T.O.T., and was fictionalised in a poem titled The Tale of Mr Brackett. The poem narrates the story of a man immersed in his newspaper who stumbles off the train into the deserted station. Initially believing he was blinded by darkness, Brackett soon discovers his surroundings and attempts to wave down passing trains. However, none would stop, leading him to endure a long wait, where he ultimately resorted to burning posters with his last match to signal for help.

The grim yet imaginative tale garnered notable notoriety, embellished with six illustrations by FH Stingemore, a designer renowned for creating London Underground maps at the time. In 1997, the story gained further cultural traction when it was featured on a television programme. The editor of T.O.T. later emphasised that such stories were inspired by real events, although the surrounding myths had evolved over time into works of fiction.

In reality, the abandoned South Kentish Town station presents a less dramatic scene. During World War II, parts of the station were repurposed as an air-raid shelter, and while the platforms have been dismantled, the original street-level building remains. Characteristic elements, such as semi-circular windows and distinctive red tiles, serve as reminders of its former function.

Over recent years, the building has hosted a variety of businesses, including a tobacconist and a Cash Converters, but currently operates as the venue for a reality Escape Room game. Participants at this establishment can immerse themselves in a thematic experience designed around the frightful ordeal of the fictional Mr Brackett, allowing players to navigate a series of puzzles and clues akin to the challenges faced by the lost passenger from decades past.

As the story of South Kentish Town station continues to intrigue Londoners and visitors alike, its legacy lives on through the blend of true history and legendary narrative, keeping the spirit of London's underground heritage alive.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)